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The Family Worship Hour

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THE FAMILY WORSHIP HOUR

A Project Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

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June 1963

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	4
III. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES	9
IV. ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION	15
V. PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES	17
VI. FORMAT	19
VII. COVERAGE	21
VIII. AUDIENCE RESPONSE AND REACTION	22
IX. EVALUATION	24
APPENDIX A A Sample Family Worship Hour Script	27
APPENDIX B A Sample of the 5-Minute Version of The Family Worship Hour.	31
APPENDIX C A Sampling from the Mail Bag.	33
BIBLIOGRAPHY	35

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Family Worship Hour, heard by approximately 30-million persons every week, is the least known and the least publicized major broadcasting project among the rank and file members of the sponsoring church body. Little is known of its history, purpose, operation, and scope by the average member of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Having served as the author and speaker for several series of devotions, the writer's curiosity was aroused enough to investigate in greater detail how and why the program functions. The vision which conceived the program, the history, the aim and purpose, the phenomenal expansion, the ready acceptance by radio stations, the immense coverage with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the simplicity of operation is a story of modern mission history which deserves to be told more fully. True, it does not assume the features of the spectacular and it does not record conversions by the thousands. This is not its purpose. But it will thrill the hearts of all who are concerned with getting God's Word and the message of His love out into the hearing and the homes of people. This is the aim of the program, and this it does most effectively. It invites people to hear, to believe, to be what is heard, and to pray. To this must be added the working and power of the Holy Spirit, over Whom we cannot exercise control, and Who works when, where, and how He pleases through the Word. Even without the benefit of statistics, the program, Family Worship Hour, may be judged successful because it does what Christ commanded His Church:

"Preach the Gospel to every creature."¹

The purpose of this paper is to tell the story of The Family Worship Hour, to urge more widespread publicity of this project in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, and to evaluate the program in the light of contemporary theological thinking on the subject of the Church's use of the mass communications media for the propagation of the Christian faith.

Most of the background material pertaining directly to the history and operation of The Family Worship Hour was obtained or substantiated through interview and correspondence with the Reverend Elmer J. Knoernschild, Director of Programming for the Lutheran Laymen's League, and who serves as program director and production supervisor for The Family Worship Hour. The writer is indebted to Mr. Knoernschild for the time, patience, and effort which he expended in searching the files and providing the information.

The Family Worship Hour comes in two versions: a 15-minute program titled "The Family Worship Hour," and a 5-minute "Day by Day with Jesus" program. We shall focus primarily on the 15-minute program.

In evaluating The Family Worship Hour, we shall recall that this program is but one of the forms in which The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod uses the modern media of audio mass communications. It owns and operates Radio Station KFUD on the campus of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. This station broadcasts continuously during daylight hours, and religious programs in a variety of formats emanate from its towers daily to a radius of about 200 miles. This station also serves as the training laboratory for seminarians who later concern themselves with

¹Mark 16:15

broadcasting the Christian faith in parishes throughout the world. Through its Extension Service, KFUE provides guidance, helps, and materials including complete recorded programs, to congregations and pastors anywhere. Local congregations broadcast special programs over their community stations. Pastors appear regularly with the message of Christ on local radio and television stations. The International Lutheran Hour has been on the air "bringing Christ to the Nations" since 1935 and spans the globe today.² With the advent of television, a new media challenged the ingenuity of the Church and drama was employed as the vehicle for the Gospel. The Lutheran Television Production Committee of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod was organized on June 28, 1951, and has distributed the film, "This Is the Life," to television stations throughout the country and beyond since it began functioning over a decade ago.³

Perhaps the more spectacular television program, "This is the Life," the highly publicized Lutheran Hour which features a regular personality, and the beautiful facilities and continuous broadcasting of KFUE somewhat overshadows the Family Worship Hour operation. This may explain the lack of attention which it receives as a servant of the Church. We shall attempt to demonstrate, however, that it is in a class by itself; that it serves a distinct purpose; and that it deserves, without taking anything from the other fine and effective programs for broadcasting the Gospel, to be known more widely and supported generously by Christian people.

²ERB, "Radio Evangelism, Network", Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 878.

³"Television", Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 1041.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Radio is a Twentieth Century phenomenon. Marconi succeeded in signaling a single letter across the Atlantic in 1901. The national election returns, of November 2, 1920, were broadcast by Station KDKA, Pittsburg. This is generally accepted as the beginning of regularly scheduled broadcasting.¹ With the addition of television, the industry has grown into a colossal giant. Over 98% of all American homes are equipped with radios.² Two radios are found in 30% of the homes, while 18% have three or more radios. The "listeners on wheels" form a vast potential with thirty-five million radio sets in cars. Programs are broadcast from 3,005 AM Stations and 524 FM Stations in the United States.³ Although eight out of ten homes are equipped with television sets, radio is by no means dead.

This has significance for the Twentieth Century man who is committed to the Christian faith. Jesus Christ withdrew His visible presence after His death and resurrection with the charge to His followers to proclaim the saving Good News to every creature in every nation. The end will come, He promised, when the Gospel of the Kingdom has been proclaimed to all the world as a witness to all nations.⁴ Through the

¹John Gillies, A Primer for Christian Broadcasters (Chicago: Moody Press, 1955), p. 18.

²John W. Bachman, The Church in the World of Radio-Television (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. 19.

³Lois J. Anderson, Editor, How You Can Broadcast Religion (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, Broadcasting and Film Commission, 220 Fifth Ave., 1957), p.8.

⁴Cf. Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15.16; Matthew 24:24.

"magic" of radio, God answered the prayer expressed in the hymn:

Oh, that I had a thousand voices
To praise my God with thousand tongues!
My heart, which in the Lord rejoices,
Would then proclaim in grateful songs
To all, wherever I might be,
What great things God hath done for me.⁵

By means of radio, the voice is multiplied, not merely a thousand times, but millions of times. In this the Church has the opportunity to multiply her praise and witness, to reach out increditably far with the Gospel, and to speak to more people in one broadcast than was possible in a lifetime of preaching before the invention of radio.

From nearly the beginning of broadcasting history, there were those who saw the possibilities and used radio in the service of Christ. January 2, 1921, marks the beginning of religious broadcasting. On that day, Edwin Van Etten, rector of Calvary Episcopal Church, Pittsburg, Pa., conducted an Epiphany service over Station KDKA in Pittsburg, the city which figures so prominently in radio history.⁶ A new window had been opened through which the Epiphany light could stream into a dark world.

Thinking and dedicated leaders have urged the Church to use the electronic tool wisely for the right purpose, the proclamation of life by the grace of God through Christ. John W. Bachman quotes from the "Report on Radio and TV Policy," submitted by the Board of Information and Stewardship to the Executive of the General Council of the United

⁵The Lutheran Hymnal (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), No. 30, stanza 1 and No. 243, stanza 1.

⁶ERB, "Radio Evangelism," Lutheran Cyclopedia, Erwin L. Lueker, Editor in Chief (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 879.

Church of Canada, in this pertinent statement:

"A commission appointed by the United Church of Canada to study its relationship to broadcasting declared that the church exists to proclaim "the good news that God has come to share our human lot in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ for the purpose of redemption and reconciliation. This is the Word, without reference to which no other fact or concern of life can be properly understood."⁷

Such evangelistic considerations also led to the founding of Radio Station KFUE, St. Louis, in the attic of the old Concordia Seminary on South Jefferson Street. This occurred on December 14, 1924, under the leadership of Dr. Walter A. Maier and Dr. John H. C. Fritz, who also served as the first Radio Committee. Members of the Lutheran Laymen's League, the Seminary students, the Walther League, and other individuals contributed \$14,000 for the equipping of the station. At first two hours each week were devoted to broadcasting over the station.⁸ Such were the humble beginnings which resulted in the present fine facilities and extensive operation of KFUE, the International Lutheran Hour, the KFUE Radio and Television Extension Service, an aggressive Television program beginning in 1951, and a steady stream of Seminary students who took with them into their ministry the experience and knowledge in mass communications which they gained through service and observation at the Station.

Into this general background, The Family Worship Hour was born in 1948. It was conceived as a means to revive the family altar in the homes of America. The idea of visiting by radio in the homes with Scripture

⁷Bachman, op. cit., p. 109.

⁸Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 879.

readings, hymns, meditations, and prayers originated in the Pittsburgh, Pa., area in 1943. A dedicated Lutheran layman, Dr. Homer Hamm, contributed a sum of \$50,000 to get the project under way and he may be designated as the originator of the program. Following the organization of a control committee, an organization was formed and incorporated under the laws of the State of Illinois for non-profit corporations in November, 1947. The Reverend Theodore Martens was offered the position of Executive Director. Pastor Martens was released from the pastorate of his congregation in Pittsburgh, Pa., to assume the directorate of The Family Worship Hour on September 26, 1948. Offices were set up at 77 West Washington Street, Chicago, Illinois. Pastor Martens reports in the Lutheran Cyclopedia that the first broadcast was made September 27, 1948, over eleven stations, and in less than a year over one-hundred stations carried the transcriptions in thirty-two States and Canada.⁹

The original purpose of The Family Worship Hour, which it has never yielded, was to provide "Christ-centered Devotions for the Homes of the World." This emphasis is in the spirit of the New Testament and in good Lutheran tradition. We are emphasizing "the church in thine house" more strongly in the parish program today. Dr. Erdmann W. Frenk writes:

Martin Luther as a man "of the people, by the people, and for the people" could not help but be interested in the religious health of the home. One cannot read his sermons without feeling his grip on the conscience of the common people. A faith which did not claim the entire man in all of his social relationships was no faith at all, he emphasized time and again. His zeal for

⁹"Worship Hour, Family," Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 1140.

religious schools in the interest of better home life needs no restatement. His Table of Christian Duties were no afterthought in a catechism which he wrote specifically for home use. Time and again he stresses the truth that church and home stand or fall together. As a result, he did not hesitate to use every legitimate means to channel his religion into the homes of his day. He was as much interested in the reformation of the home as of the church. He had a stake in both and left no stone unturned to bring the two to bear upon each other. We face a like need today. The church of our day must find ways and means of moving more effectively into the homes for the mutual benefit of church and home.¹⁰

We shall discuss subsequently how The Family Worship Hour unswervingly sticks to the single goal of offering Christ-centered devotions to the homes of the world by means of recording and radio broadcasting.

The growth of The Family Worship Hour project is phenomenal. The transcriptions, including the 5-minute version, is aired daily by about 500 stations. Including Veterans Hospitals and other "specialized" affiliates who use the program, 530 transmissions are released currently every week. This number includes outlets in Okinawa, Canada, Africa, and Europe. It is estimated that the listening audience of the program is equal to that of The Lutheran Hour, i.e., approximately thirty million persons each week.¹¹

¹⁰Erdmann W. Frenk, "Getting the Church into the Home", Helping Families through the Church, Edited by Oscar E. Feucht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 128.

¹¹These statistics are from the file of the Reverend Elmer J. Knoernschild, program director and production supervisor of the Family Worship Hour, with offices at the Lutheran Laymen's League Building, 2185 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis 10, Mo.

CHAPTER III

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of The Family Worship Hour was from the very beginning, and still is, to provide Christ-centered devotions for the homes of the world. In a promotional folder, entitled "Christ-Centered Devotions For the Homes of the World," the following statement of purpose is made:

"Togetherness" is the key to family happiness, claim many counselors. "Take the whole family to the ball game. . . Make that home construction job a family project. . . Let all members share in making family decisions," they say. But there is a more important element to togetherness that's often neglected - regular family devotions. To encourage "family altars," the practice of daily Christian home devotions, the Lutheran Laymen's League produces The Family Worship Hour and Day by Day With Jesus, designed for radio broadcasting Monday through Saturday each week. These Bible-based meditations by various outstanding speakers are presented in the conviction that Jesus Christ, God's Son and our Brother, can give families a common faith that will bind them together in love.¹

By means of Scripture reading, meditations, and prayers, which are prepared by various speakers, and music provided by competent choral groups, The Family Worship Hour seeks to gather families around the Word of God. Although the target is the "family", it is assumed that the family may be neither Lutheran nor Christian, and that many listeners may not live in a family group. Therefore the speakers are instructed to write their copy in such a way that it will appeal to the "average" listener.

Here we come to grips with the great problem of communicating

¹This promotional folder may be ordered from The Family Worship Hour, 2185 Hampton Ave., St. Louis 10, Mo.

effectively in general, and of communicating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in particular. Telling the Good News defines communication as "the art of transferring a thought, insight, idea, or other creative form from one individual to another so that comprehension of 'giver' and 'receiver' is as nearly identical as possible."² The alert religious broadcaster will be aware of the difficulty of communicating effectively to an unseen audience, which is very real, but must be imagined by him. The choice of thought, words, and illustrations are determined by what he imagines his audience to be.

In religious broadcasting, there are additional difficulties of communication. Basic is the attitude of the uncommitted to religion. The Gospel is still "foolishness" to some and a "stumbling block" to others. Bachman points this out:

Not everyone will find the Word interesting, meaningful, and convincing, even when it is expressed most forcefully. This, however, is no justification for lazy and shoddy attempts to communication.³

The Christian broadcaster may err particularly in two directions as he faces the problem of the unpopularity of the faith of Christ. He may proceed in disregard of good broadcasting techniques as he proclaims the Gospel. On the other hand, he may be tempted to make the Gospel palatable by offering something less or something more than Christ and His truth, and by accomodating the divine truth to the current, accepted cultural

²Philip A. Johnson, et al., editors, Telling the Good News (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 184.

³John W. Bachman, The Church in the World of Radio-Television (New York: Association Press, 1960), p. p. 114.

standards. Bachman instructs that there must be "relevance without conformity."⁴ To ask what listener-viewers want is eliciting the message from those to whom we speak, rather than witnessing to the truth of the entrusted message.

The broadcaster of the Word must, above all, be faithful. Such faithfulness to the Word demands a relevance which is entirely different from conformity or accommodation.⁵ In relation to his script and audience, he must be interesting, challenging, provocative, and competent at communicating essential ideas. In addition to being faithful to the Word, he must be hopeful, loving, and honest.⁶ The Church in the world of mass communications cannot be of that world, "lest its distinctive nature be perverted."⁷

This brings us to an even more crucial problem faced by The Family Worship Hour broadcast, as well as any other program which seeks to communicate religion. The broadcasting industry thrives on the accepted opinions and caters to the accepted standards of faith, life, and conduct. The Gospel goes counter to these. In proclaiming the Gospel faithfully, we stand in judgment upon the audience and upon the very media which we are using to present "the better Way."⁸ "It is increasingly becoming

⁴Ibid., p. 111.

⁵Ibid., p. 115

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid., p. 120

⁸Malcolm Boyd, Crises In Communication (Garden City, New York; Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1957), p. 21.

obvious that we are being evangelized by our secular technical society far more than we are in the process of evangelizing it for Jesus Christ."⁹

The revelation of God in Jesus Christ goes against "Man's ordinary interpretation of his predicament." This becomes to Martin E. Marty "the improper opinion" which we are bound to proclaim.¹⁰ It is part of the "crises in Communication" with which Malcolm Boyd wrestles at length.¹¹

The problem which confronts the Church in presenting a program such as The Family Worship Hour is to present a message which is as unpopular as Christ was to the established institutions of His day on earth, to present that message without accomodation or conformity to prevailing social and cultural patterns, to present this message to an audience of committed and uncommitted souls, to present it with the conviction that this message is what the audience needs above anything else and that we dare not keep silent about it, and to use the best possible forms, methods, and techniques in presenting the way of life in Christ. As its special object, The Family Worship Hour seeks to gather families together around the Word of God.

How can this be achieved? Dr. Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, speaker of the International Lutheran Hour, cites as the aim of sound church public

⁹Ibid., p. 23

¹⁰Martin E. Marty, The Improper Opinion (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 74.

¹¹Boyd, op. cit., passim.

relations "to draw attention not to the torch-holder, but to the torch; not to our good works, but to the light from which they spring; not to ourselves, but to the Lord Jesus Christ."¹² Asking, "What can we do?", Martin E. Marty answers, among other considerations:

Since religious and Christian use of mass communications will represent a minority situation in a world like ours, it is important that the churches go about their first business, taking on "the form of a servant" and presenting Christ through this mask or in this image rather than through noisy self-advertisement.¹³

Stripped of every ulterior motive, of every effort to promote the organization or church institution, of every desire to enhance the reputation of the performer, there is only one worthy aim, and that is to bring individuals and families under the influence of God's Word, to speak the truth in love, to identify Christ with people and their problems, solely for the purpose of helping, healing, comforting, and saving those who will listen to the Gospel, which alone will save the individual. In this effort, Christ must increase, we must decrease. The purpose should not be to get praise, admiration, support, or pecuniary gain from the audience for the organization, institution, or individual, but to give and share Christ, who redeemed us all, and who came, not to be served, but to serve and to give His life as the offering for sinners.

In this respect, The Family Worship Hour measures up notably. It is offered to radio stations as a public service. The speaker and the sponsoring church remain anonymous. No plug for membership in a specific

¹²Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, *Telling the Good News*, Philip A. Johnson Et al., editors (St. Louis: Concordia Publ. House, 1962), p. 2

¹³Marty, op. cit., p. 141.

denomination or congregation, no featuring of the name, achievements, or influence of the speaker, no pitch for donations detracts from the message and its purpose. All prejudice for or against the mention of a sponsoring church, a speaker, or a secondary cause is thus eliminated. There is only the Word of God, the salvation through Christ and the invitation to hear, accept, worship, pray, and be a Christian in the light of Christ's life, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. To this end, speakers are encouraged and guided to do their best and the most effective approach and format is sought. Some follow-up effort is made to help families establish the Family Altar in the home.

The emphasis on worship in the home makes The Family Worship Hour unique among the other mass media techniques employed by the sponsoring organizations of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The International Lutheran Hour, e.g., is evangelistically prophetic and strongly didactic in its approach. It bids the hearer to give Christ a trial and a chance. The very name labels it as denominationally oriented. "This Is the Life" demonstrates dramatically how Christ makes a difference in life's relationships and situations and seeks to direct the unchurched prospect into the congregational fold of one of our churches through the "Telemission" follow-up. The Family Worship Hour augments both of these great efforts by concentrating on worship and the practice of Christianity in the home.

CHAPTER IV

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION

When the original gift of Dr. Homer Hamm was used up, funds for the operation of the program were sought from individuals throughout Synod. Despite well-planned efforts, The Family Worship Hour suffered perennially during the early years from lack of sufficient resources to expand. Following the 1953 Convention of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in Houston, Texas, the Lutheran Laymen's League assumed the sponsorship and cost of the program.

Control of The Family Worship Hour is vested in what is called "The Lutheran Hour Committee." Actually, this is the Lutheran Laymen's League's Radio Missions Committee. Its personnel includes, at the present time, John H. Bleke, chairman; Luther W. Jennejahn, vice-chairman, C. Walter Loeber; V. Jay Martin; James H. Mayes; Walter Rugland; Walter R. Schur; Harry G. Barr, president of the Lutheran Laymen's League, ex officio member; Elmer Kosche, secretary of the Lutheran Laymen's League, advisory member; Raymond W. Schnitzmeyer, financial secretary, advisory member; and Ralph W. Simon, treasurer, advisory member.

The cost of production, distribution, and promotion for The Family Worship Hour in 1962 was approximately \$55,000.00. Of this amount, about \$10,000.00 were spent for mementos and worship aids which were supplied to listeners who responded to the program by mail.

Since the Lutheran Laymen's League assumed sponsorship, the financing is met by this organization from its annual budget. A little desk

calendar, containing a contribution envelope for each month of the year, is sent annually to a mailing list of approximately 35,000 names. This has yielded the budget about \$10,000.00 annually for the project. No appeal for funds is ever made to the radio audience.

The low operation cost is made possible by the fact that almost one-hundred percent of the time on the air is given free of charge by the station. This is in keeping with the Federal Communications Commission provision that radio stations are obligated to give a part of their air time as a free public service to worthy non-commercial organizations. The churches are included in this provision. In 1958 to 1959 the total free broadcasting time for public service programming was 5%.¹ Only in the case of four stations out of approximately 500 is the broadcasting time for The Family Worship Hour being purchased, and this is not paid by the national Lutheran Laymen's League, but by congregations and sponsors.

While many of the "free" stations which The Family Worship Hour uses are solicited by direct mail from the St. Louis office of the Lutheran Laymen's League, contacts are continually sought through the Lutheran Laymen's League representatives in the field. The quality and content of the program readily recommends it to radio stations as a public service program. Since the program is aired on free time, the choice of time-slots is usually made by the local station.

¹Telling the Good News, Philip A. Johnson et al., editors (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 123-124.

CHAPTER V

PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES

Most of the recording of the components of The Family Worship Hour is done at the Lutheran Laymen's League studios in St. Louis. However, in instances where a trip to headquarters by a speaker is impractical, the script recordings are made near the home of the speaker. Speakers are chosen from various parts of the United States. Most of the music is taken from the Lutheran Hour library, although selections by various competent groups are utilized.

The various components are assembled in Chicago at Sound Studios, Inc., 230 N. Michigan Boulevard. The "advance" copy of the program is sent for final approval to the St. Louis Headquarters. When final approval has been given, Sound Studios duplicates the 15-minute program on tape at $7\frac{1}{2}$ ips, two 15-minute programs on one 1200 foot tape. "Day by Day with Jesus" is processed at the RCA plant in Indianapolis, Indiana, on 10-inch LP Hi-Fi "platters" with three 5-minute programs on each side.

Program director and production supervisor of both versions of the program is the Reverend Elmer J. Knoernschild, Director of Programming for the Lutheran Laymen's League. Miss Margaret Helmstetter, his secretary, prepares all "prep sheets" and selects the music for use on the broadcast. Technical assistance is supplied by Mrs. Corrine Duever, tape editor, and Mr. Earl Birkicht, the Lutheran Laymen's League sound recording engineer.

Relations with Sound Studios, Inc., are handled through the com-

pany's president and owner, Mr. Michael P. Eisenmenger. He has been associated with The Family Worship Hour almost since its inception. Mr. Eisenmenger, a Roman Catholic by persuasion, has consistently shown concerned interest and produced work of the highest quality in making the recordings.

CHAPTER VI

FORMAT

Through the years, experiments have been made on various presentations of The Family Worship Hour, including a dramatic format. Station executives have indicated their preference, however, for the present type of program which features well-written speech components interspersed with good music.

The dramatic format will again be employed this year (1963) during Christian Family Week, May 5 to 12. The sequences will revolve around the Mitchell's, a family of six persons, and will present, in this order, the place of prayer in the Christian life, the "church in the home," the use of various Bible translations, family church attendance, church work in relation to family life, and the witness of the Christian home to the community. A brief summation and commentary will be included with each dramatic presentation.¹

Aside from such an occasional variation, The Family Worship Hour format has stabilized to a devotional type program. An effort is made to involve the listeners in the Scripture reading and prayers, but also to follow an "easy listening" format. The "beatnik" formats are avoided because of the difficulty and expense involved in production and because they do not lend themselves as naturally to an inspiration-type broadcast which attempts to create an attitude of worship and reverence in the minds of the listeners.

¹Reported in The Lutheran Layman, official publication of the Lutheran Laymen's League, Vol. XXXIV, No. 3, March 1, 1963, 2185 Hampton Ave., St. Louis, Mo., p. 1.

The Family Worship Hour format is of the type most popular in the broadcasting efforts of our church denomination. Victor Constien discovered through a survey that 68.4% of all locally produced religious programs broadcast by congregations of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are of the studio originated devotional type; 22.4% are worship services direct from church; and 9.2% are the informational-inspirational type. The programs of a devotional nature total 90.8%.² The Synod is not peculiar in this. John Gillies observes:

Of the hundreds of Gospel programs aired each day, undoubtedly the greatest single type is the preaching program. . . This type of program may be both devotional and evangelistic, but it is essentially a preaching effort.³

Every effort is made to prevent drag or drabness in The Family Worship Hour. The rapid shift from one component to another gives it a snappy character without being jarring. The program is introduced with a pertinent "teaser" which identifies the program and announces the theme. Each speaking component is introduced with a question, an illustration, or an intriguing statement to hook the listener. There are no long pauses, no rambling. The program moves through speech and music guided by a single theme and purpose.

The program may best be illustrated by a sample script used in actual broadcast. Samples are appended. APPENDIX A is a script prepared by this writer for The Family Worship Hour. APPENDIX B is from the files of the Reverend Elmer Knoernschild.

²Victor Constien, "A Survey of Types and Formats of Religious Radio Programs." Bachelor's Thesis, Mimeographed by Radio Station, KFUO, St. Louis, passim.

³John Gillies, A Primer for Christian Broadcasters (Chicago: Moody Press, 1955), p. 7

CHAPTER VII

COVERAGE

The number of stations which carry The Family Worship Hour varies from day to day and from week to week. Veterans Hospitals and other "specialized" affiliates use the program for regular devotions. An average of about 500 stations carry the program daily. In addition to the outlets in the United States, stations in Okinawa, Canada, Europe, and Africa use the transcriptions.

The estimated listening audience of The Family Worship Hour is approximately thirty million persons each week. This, incidentally, is equal to that of The Lutheran Hour.

The mail bag reveals that listeners include people of all ages and all walks of life. As is to be expected, the majority of "fan mail" comes from adults, though occasionally a child will write. Frequently letters come from persons who are not Christian, but who are attracted to the messages because they "make sense." This substantiates the observation of John W. Bachman:

Broadcasting is obviously one means of making some contact, no matter how limited, with numbers of persons who are not willing to venture into a church building. Surveys indicate that every national religious broadcast attracts to its audience many more nonchurchgoers than attend the most popular evangelistic meetings. The New Haven Communications Research Project concluded that three out of five households watch or listen to some religious program with regularity.¹

Because The Family Worship Hour time is basically "sustaining", the time-slots range from 3:45 A.M., an excellent time-slot over clear channel 50,000 watt WCKY in Cincinnati, to a 12-midnight release.

¹John W. Bachman, The Church In the World of Radio-Television New York: Association Press, 1960), pp. 143. 144.

CHAPTER VIII

AUDIENCE RESPONSE AND REACTION

The program director and production supervisor of The Family Worship Hour, Mr. Knoernschild, does not believe that it is sufficient simply to put a broadcast on the air. For this reason, about 20% of the budget is allocated to the purchase and distribution of so-called "worship-aids." These consist of prayer books, Bible reading guides, pamphlets on family living and family devotions, and souvenir bookmarks.¹

While these mementos serve to stimulate mail response, they are not offered for that purpose. Their purpose is to serve as "worship aids." In keeping with the aims and objectives of the programs, the hope is that these worshipsaids will help listeners establish their own family altars and "follow through" on the broadcast by conducting family worship in their own homes.

Mail response varies with the appeal and quality of the program and the memento which is offered. The Family Worship Hour receives an average of fifty pieces of mail a day.

Requests for mementos, copies of meditations, and miscellaneous requests are channeled primarily through The Family Worship Hour De-

¹Among the titles are Building the Christian Home by Oscar E. Feucht; Our Family Worship, a 24-page booklet; Mealtime Prayers; My Heart Speaks to God by Paul W. Streufert; and Light for Your Way, a Bible reading guide. These may be ordered from the Lutheran Laymen's League, 2185 Hampton Avenue, St. Louis 10, Mo.

partment at the Lutheran Laymen's League headquarters in St. Louis, Mo. Requests for Eastern Canada are handled either through the St. Louis office or through the Lutheran Hour office in Kitchener, Ontario. In Western Canada they receive the attention of the Reverend E. R. Fox, Edmonton, Alberta. Overseas requests are forwarded to St. Louis. All "problem" mail is turned over to the Lutheran Hour Counseling Department for a prompt reply.

Replies come from all segments and age groups of our society. Occasionally a "crack-pot" letter finds its way to headquarters. The testimonials which the office receives are entirely unsolicited. As a sampling of these "kudos", we have attached EXHIBIT C.

CHAPTER IX

EVALUATION

The Family Worship Hour is an ingenious use of the mass communication media in response to Christ's command to evangelize the world. It's special emphasis is on Christ-centered devotions for the homes of the world. It serves to augment what is done by Radio Station KFUD, the Lutheran Hour, the television program "This Is the Life", and the broadcasts of many pastors and congregations throughout the Synod.

Without reference to speaker or sponsor, the program seeks only to point men to Christ as necessary for their lives and homes. It seeks to preach God's Word without distraction by or to anything else. John Gillies refers to St. Paul's words in Romans chapter 10, verse 17, "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ," and comments:

This is a maxim which the Christian broadcaster should never forget. While there are many ways in which to verbally present the Word of God, the individual who finds himself behind a microphone has an important mission to perform.¹

We feel that The Family Worship Hour operates in this spirit. No attempt is made to disguise the fact that this is a religious program. It offers good music and a message. The message is positive throughout. Doctrinal arguments are avoided. The listener is not confronted with a denominational bias, because the producer of the program is not identified - only the Motivator, Jesus Christ! The format includes invitation to

¹John Gillies, A Primer for Christian Broadcasters (Chicago: Moody Press, 1955), p. 27.

worship, reading of the Scriptures, excellent vocal music (which is not spectacular, but in harmony with the theme), a soul-searching message which exalts the Savior, and prayer. Brief and simple transitions are made from one component to the next. The listener is urged in the "teaser" to turn to the Bible and an effort is made throughout the program to involve him. Fitting illustrations and anecdotes are sought to hook the listener, in the right sense.

In comparing the program with the best thought on the broadcasting of religion, The Family Worship Hour seems to rate very well in its present format and mode of operation. It has a well defined aim and a completely Christ-centered approach. It aims to benefit no-one and nothing except the listener. It does not conform nor accomodate itself to the prevailing culture, but seeks to insert the leaven of the Gospel into the institutions of this world, beginning with radio and the home.

We feel that two areas should receive more attention: publicity and audience response.

The program, its aim, the philosophy behind it, its scope, its coverage, its success, etc., ought to be publicized more in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. More hearts would open to its cause as information engenders the interest of people. The program needs such support. A larger budget would enable a more effective follow-up in the form of literature and devotional helps. And for success we need people who will storm heaven with their prayers for the Holy Spirit's blessing upon the hearts of hearers.

The second area of attention really flows from the first. A greater effort could be made to obtain audience response and to offer more books

and pamphlets on the Christian home and home devotions. The follow-through and follow-up could be intensified in the same spirit of unselfish concern for the spiritual welfare of the listeners.

It will also be imperative that those in control will continue to search and experiment in order to find the best possible approach and format. Changing times and environments quickly make what was once effective obsolete and demand new approaches and methods.

The Family Worship Hour deserves to be considered on the level with "This Is the Life" and the Lutheran Hour. It is an effective medium for the Gospel of Christ which could become an even more effective tool, not for the honor and glory of Synod, or the Lutheran Church, but for the spread of Christianity and for the spiritual welfare of people and families. Whatever serves those purposes also blesses our Synod and yields rich dividends to society.

The most fitting and positive thought to append as a conclusion to an evaluation of The Family Worship Hour is expressed by the ancient prophet who quotes the Lord Himself:

It (My Word) shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.²

²Isaiah 55:11.

APPENDIX A

A SAMPLE FAMILY WORSHIP HOUR SCRIPT

THE FAMILY WORSHIP HOUR

Meditation No. 3

THEME: "The Friend of Sinners"

Scripture Reading with Introduction: (1:25)

There is no one, except Jesus, of whom it can be said that He did no wrong. No one could accuse Him of sin. Still people found fault with Him. One such instance of fault-finding was that He accepted the invitation of a sinner to be a guest in his home. We read from the Gospel of Saint Luke, chapter 19, verses 1 to 10:

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

The Meditation (4:05)

"Birds of a feather flock together" was the insinuation of certain people when they saw that Jesus was a guest at the home of a sinner. They implied that Jesus was not as holy as He pretended to be, or He would not associate with such degraded characters. The derisive criticism is recorded by Saint Luke in his Gospel, Chapter 15, verses 1 and 2:

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."

What was said in criticism and derision is the very thing which we ought to admire in Jesus and which should give us hope and comfort. I am a sinner and Jesus receives sinners - praise His holy name! Jesus was born of sinners. Have you ever carefully looked at the ancestry of Christ in the opening chapters of the New Testament? Three of the four women mentioned in that list, Tamar, Rahab, and Bathsheba, were guilty of the sin of adultery. We find there also the names of Ahaz, an idolater, who required his own children to pass through fire; Manasseh, who suffered the penalty of his shameful misdeeds in bondage; and Amon, one of the basest kings in sacred history.

Jesus was born for sinners. In an age when both the Jewish and the pagan world were corrupt, our Lord made His entry into the world and said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

While He was born of sinners, and for sinners, He never engaged in their sins, as His critics intimated. He remained holy, harmless, unfiled, separate from sinners.

But in order to save sinners, He associated with them, took upon Himself the guilt of every man, and paid for it on the Cross. "God made

Him to be sin for us." "The Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. "He laid down His life for sinners, in behalf of sinners, for the benefit of sinners, in the place of sinners.

What a lovely portrait is drawn of Jesus in the Gospels! He does not stand at a distance issuing orders that sinners should make themselves better before He will have anything to do with them. He mingles with them, enriches their lives, ennobles their purposes, lifts them out of shame and iniquity. Through His matchless parables He reveals a heart that throbs with affection for sinners. A member of a despised and bitterly hated race is the hero and example in the parable of the Good Samaritan. To depict God's forgiving love, He pictures an earthly father's forgiveness, the joyful welcome home, and the full restoration to sonship of a prodigal son who had squandered all his goods in wild living, but who repented. The humble cry of the penitent publican, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner," was like a symphony of unsurpassed beauty and thrilled the heart of the loving Lord, while the self-righteous boasting of the Pharisee produced a repelling discord in His ear. Among His last words on the Cross was the prayer in behalf of the people who hung Him there, "Father, forgive them."

Christ's love transforms sinners. He received sinners and ate with them to give them the living water, to break to them the bread of life, to awaken them from the sleep and death of lust and sin, and to give them life abundantly.

To do this, He suffered as if He Himself had been the sinner. He drained to the last dregs the bitter cup of God's wrath over sin. Now "whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life." Today, ascended into heaven, the sinners' Friend pleads in behalf of

sinners, holding up the hands with the print of the nails, and draws down upon them the compassionate mercy of a forgiving God.

This Friend of sinners says to us, "I must stay at your house today." We have every reason to receive Him joyfully and lovingly. His transforming presence is what our hearts and homes need above anything else.

The Prayers (1:10)

Jesus said that whatever we shall ask the Father in His name, He will give it to us. To pray in the name of Jesus means, among other things, that we recognize our own unworthiness in the sight of God and that we have been made acceptable to God through faith in Christ, our Savior. Let us pray in that attitude:

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, we thank Thee for Thy great love in sending Thy Son into the world to free us from all iniquities. Give us grace to receive Christ by faith into our hearts and homes as our Savior and Friend. Fill us with the joy of Thy salvation. Cause Thy love to transform us from children of darkness into children of light. Prosper the course of the Gospel throughout the whole world so that the sunshine of Thy grace and forgiveness may dispel the darkness of sin. Father, forgive those who are responsible for war and bloodshed, for the oppression of the poor and helpless, and for the suppression of Thy Word, and turn them unto Thyself: through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (45 sec.)

Loving children go to their father to express their joys, sorrows, and needs. If our relationship to God is right, we shall not hesitate to come to Him in prayer. To aid us, Christ taught us to call God, "Our Father", and to pray these petitions: THE LORD'S PRAYER

APPENDIX B

A SAMPLE OF THE 5-MINUTE VERSION OF THE FAMILY WORSHIP HOUR

DAY BY DAY WITH JESUS

Theme: "Children of God"

The Meditation (1:45)

A young father returned to his home one day after an exhausting and difficult day at the office only to find his children running about the house in noisy and energetic play. In a fit of temper, he scolded them and sent them to bed.

Next morning he found a note under his bedroom door. In scrawled letters it said: "be good to your children and they will be good to you. Yours truly, God."

God didn't write that note, of course, but He has expressed principles which will help all of us to live more peaceful and profitable lives at home and in the community. To husbands and wives He has said: "Live together in knowledge. . . as heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered."

In a broader sense, this counsel applies equally as well to the relationship of parents to children and children to each other, indeed, to relationships within the entire family of mankind. God says that, in everything that we do or say at home or in the community, we should conduct ourselves in such a way that it becomes apparent that we are children of God and Heirs of heaven.

As Christ was, so we are to be. As He was selfless in His interests,

so we should put aside selfish considerations. As He loved us enough to give His life for our salvation, so our love should seek out the highest good of those about us.

God has sent all of us a note today. It reads: "You are all my children through faith in Christ. Act like it. Be good unto others as I have been good to you."

Prayer (30 sec.)

Only God can make us better than we are. Only He can help us to come closer to what He wants us to be. We pray:

Blessed Lord, lead us to know You better, to love you more deeply, to believe in You more richly, and to follow the example of Your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ, in all of our relationships with others at home, at work, wherever they may be. Confident of Your blessing, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thought for Today (20 sec.)

And now a Thought for Today: Martin Luther once said: "If you are not right toward God, you can never be so toward man; and this is forever true, whether wits and rakes allow it or not."

In your Bible reading at home today please turn to: The First Epistle of John, chapter 4, verses 7 to 15.

APPENDIX C

A SAMPLING FROM THE MAIL BAG

"I am truly sorry I never wrote you before this and thanked you for the personal pocket calendar you sent me. I really think it's wonderful and though I cannot send you money to help your wonderful program out I want you to know that I will continually pray for the Lord's blessing upon your Family Worship Hour."

(From a listener in St. Louis)

"I cannot tell you how much we enjoy this program. There are many of our members that listen to it every Sunday morning. Thanking you for your cooperation, I am"

(signed) Waterloo, Iowa

"... The Family Worship Hour which is heard six days a week has a regular audience of both Okinawans and Americans. It is aired from 5:30 to 5:45 p.m. One Okinawan commented that it's his favorite English program because the speaker talks slowly enough for him to learn a lot of English."

(Signed) Naha, Okinawa

"We have just received our first record and already have begun to use it in the devotional broadcast. I want to express my sincere appreciation for this wonderful service which you are giving us.

"We shall receive a tremendous blessing from these helps and our patients will be more spiritually enriched. God bless you in your work."

(Signed) VA Hospital Chaplain

"Thank you very kindly for the permission to use The Family Worship Hour series of tapes for the week of January 14-19, 1963. They were excellent and received many favorable comments."

(Signed) A Michigan pastor

"We of the staff of KHEP and our audience are enjoying the program 'Day by Day with Jesus' very much. It is more than a quality program; it has great spiritual insight."

(Signed) A Station Manager

"Recently I auditioned the taped 'Family Worship Hour.' I consider the program outstanding."

(Signed) WFKO, Kokomo, Indiana

"I would like to use the Family Worship Hour tapes. I look forward to promoting these programs of exceptional quality, both in production and content. This daily program should contribute many blessings to the patients here in the hospital."

(Signed) Army Chaplain, Munich Germany

"... I might add that we get many fine comments from listeners concerning the Family Worship Hour program. We are proud to be able to air it."

(Signed) KRFO, Owatonna, Minnesota

"... We have scheduled 'Day by Day with Jesus' for 9:25 p.m., Mondays thru Fridays. Our programming schedule throughout the day, though we are totally religious in nature, calls for some strictly music programs and this 5-minute devotional is ideal for such a program because it does not interrupt the music for a prolonged time and gets across the message we desire. . .

"I only wish I had a key time for the Family Worship Hour. One day soon, the Lord willing, we will open a time for this program, for I remember it as one of my most effective ones on Okinawa."

(Signed) General Manager KHOF-FM, Los Angeles

"I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the fine quality of your Lutheran Laymen's League productions, including the Day by Day, Family Worship Hour, and the Lutheran Hour. Although I am of another denomination, I have been fortunate in having been schooled in the fine arts and am more appreciative probably than some of our listeners of the fine quality of presentation of your music program on your productions. I have been running these series for nearly two years, but I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks for this quality programming we are able to present to our listeners."

(Signed) KDBC, Mansfield, Louisiana

"We have listened to both programs on the audition tape which you sent us last week and find your program both interesting and well-recorded. We are quite enthusiastic about the prospect of broadcasting 'The Family Worship Hour' each Sunday morning. . ."

(Signed) KYA, San Francisco

"To say that the program 'Day by Day with Jesus' has won us many friends and listeners is to put it mild. It builds a loyal audience with its wonderful inspirational message and thought. May God bless you in your great work."

(Signed) WGPA, Cairo, Georgia

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